



School Guidance on Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in Schools (K-12) 2020-2021

Slowing the spread of COVID-19 in the school setting requires a collaboration among the local health department (LHD) and schools to notify students, parents, staff members, and volunteers when an exposure to COVID-19 has occurred. The following guidance tables categorize general groups in the response, in order to fit as many school settings as possible. It is recognized that the tables do not capture the community-level partners that may be critical in supporting public health.

Before the 2020-2021 School Year Begins:

- The school should designate a point of contact (POC) for each building to work with the local health department (LHD) when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19
- A list with contact information for each POC should be provided to the LHD
- The school POC should identify high risk individuals and compile a list within each school, so those families can be easily notified if the need arises.

Guidance Scenarios

Each scenario is an example event that involves a school and LHD's response to a COVID-19 illness at a school. The scenarios share guidance for the school leaders as well as the LHD.

Exposure Scenarios: Refers to a student or staff member exposed to a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Becomes Ill Scenarios: Refers to a student or staff member who becomes ill with COVID-19 either after no contact with a person with COVID-19 symptoms or after close contact with a person with COVID-19 symptoms.

Tests Positive Scenarios: Refers to one or more student or staff member having a positive COVID-19 test, including the action necessary if in the same or different cohorts.

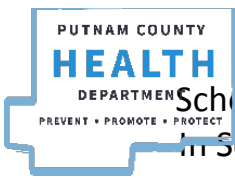
Tests Negative Scenarios: Refers to an ill student or staff member who has a negative COVID-19 test.

Does not get Tested Scenarios: Refers to a student or staff member who does not get tested in response to specific events.

As an overall framework:

- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be isolated.
- Any person who has been in close contact with a person with positive COVID-19 will be quarantined.
- Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who was exposed to COVID-19 does not **need to** quarantine. (a contact of a contact)

This framework will need to be applied within an ever-changing local context.



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Scenarios

The following table summarizes the scenarios in the tables and flowcharts that follow.

| Scenario | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Scenario 1a | A student or staff member has been exposed to a person with confirmed COVID-19 within their household. The student or staff member is not currently showing symptoms. |
| Scenario 1b | A student or staff member has been exposed to a person with confirmed COVID-19 outside of their household. The student or staff member is not currently showing symptoms. |
| Scenario 2a | A student or staff member becomes ill with primary COVID-19 symptoms (cough, temperature of greater than 100.4 °F or chills, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, loss of taste and smell). Ill symptomatic person has no known COVID-19 contacts in past 14 days |
| Scenario 2b | A student or staff member becomes ill with primary COVID-19 symptoms (cough, temperature of greater than 100.4 °F or chills, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, loss of taste and smell). Ill symptomatic person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in past 14 days. |
| Scenario 3a | An ill symptomatic student or staff member has a negative COVID-19 test and has no known COVID-19 contacts in past 14 days. |
| Scenario 3b | An ill student or staff member has a negative COVID-19 viral test. Ill person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in past 14 days. |
| Scenario 4a | An ill student or staff member does not get tested with a COVID-19 test. Ill person has no known COVID-19 contacts in past 14 days. |
| Scenario 4b | An ill student or staff member does not get tested with a COVID-19 test, and a clear alternative non-respiratory diagnosis is not identified. Ill person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in past 14 days. |
| Scenario 4c | An ill student or staff member does not get tested with a COVID-19 viral test, and a clear non-respiratory diagnosis is identified as cause of illness. Ill person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in past 14 days |
| Scenario 5 | One student or staff member has a positive COVID-19 viral test. |
| Scenario 6 | Two or more people within same cohort have a positive COVID-19 viral test within 14 days. |
| Scenario 7 | Two or more people in different cohorts have a positive COVID-19 viral test within 14 days. |



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Scenario 1a. A student or staff member has been **exposed to a person with confirmed COVID-19** within their household. The student or staff member is not currently showing symptoms.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|---|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send student home (if not home already) • Record the date school became aware and excluded the student • School will monitor the staff member daily for symptoms |
| Exposed person Student Employee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will quarantine at home <i>for 14 days after date of last exposure</i> to the COVID-19 positive contact. If additional household members become ill with COVID-19, or if the exposed person cannot avoid continued close contact, the length of quarantine may be >14 days. • Staff member may work with face mask on at all times if asymptomatic and quarantine when not at work • If exposed person becomes ill during quarantine, see Scenario 2b. |
| Household members, including siblings (if exposed person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siblings should also quarantine at home for 14 days after date of last exposure to the COVID-19 positive contact. If additional household members become ill with COVID-19, or if the exposed person cannot avoid continued close contact, the length of quarantine may be >14 days. • If exposed sibling becomes ill during quarantine, see Scenario 2b. |



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Scenario 1b. A student or staff member has been **exposed to a person with confirmed COVID-19** outside of their household. The student or staff member is not currently showing symptoms.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|---|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send student home (if not home already) • Record the date school became aware and excluded the student • School will monitor the staff member daily for symptoms |
| Exposed person Student Employee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will quarantine at home <i>for 14 days after date of last exposure</i> to the COVID-19 positive contact. • Staff member may work with face mask on at all times if asymptomatic and quarantine when not at work • If exposed person becomes ill during quarantine, see Scenario 2b. |
| Household members, including siblings (if exposed person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If household members were not exposed to the person with confirmed COVID-19: they may continue school attendance as long as exposed sibling remains healthy |



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Scenario 2a. A student or staff member **becomes ill** with 1 of these COVID-19 symptoms (cough, temperature of greater than 100.4° F or chills, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or loss of taste and smell) OR 2 of the following COVID-19 symptoms (headache, sore throat, body aches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion/runny nose). Ill symptomatic person has no known COVID-19 contacts in past 14 days.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate student or staff member and send them home as soon as possible • Record the symptoms reported or observed, and the date school became aware and excluded the individual • Note is required from healthcare provider before returning to school |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek testing/consultation from health care provider via phone, virtual, or in person visit per health care provider’s discretion. • If the ill person has a <i>negative</i> COVID-19 test, see Scenario 3b • If the ill person <i>does not get</i> tested for COVID-19, see Scenario 4b • if the ill person has a <i>positive</i> COVID-19 test, see Scenario 5 |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All household members may continue school attendance while ill student is evaluated for COVID-19 infection |



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Scenario 2b. A student or staff member **becomes ill** with 1 of these COVID-19 symptoms (cough, temperature of greater than 100.4° F or chills, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or loss of taste and smell) OR 2 of the following COVID-19 symptoms (headache, sore throat, body aches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion/runny nose). Ill symptomatic person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 contacts in past 14 days.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate student or staff member • Send student or staff home. The ill person is a “probable case” due to recent contact with a COVID-19 case • Record the symptoms reported or observed, and the date school became aware and excluded the individual • Note is required from healthcare provider before returning to school |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek testing/consultation from health care provider via phone, virtual, or in person visit per health care provider’s discretion. • If the ill person has a <i>negative</i> COVID-19 test, see Scenario 3b • If the ill person <i>does not get</i> tested for COVID-19, see Scenario 4b • if the ill person has a <i>positive</i> COVID-19 test, see Scenario 5 |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any household member should be sent home while ill student is evaluated for COVID-19 infection. Decision to quarantine will depend on ill person’s test result |



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Scenario 3a. An ill symptomatic student or staff member has a **negative** COVID-19 viral test and has no known COVID-19 contacts in the past 14 days.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|---|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send individual home (if not home already)• Note is required from healthcare provider before returning to school |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate at home until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy asymptomatic household members may continue school attendance |



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Scenario 3b. An ill student or staff member has a **negative** COVID-19 viral test. Ill person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in the past 14 days. (this person should have been in quarantine already)

| Involved person | Action |
|---|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send individual home (if not home already). The ill person is a “probable case” due to recent contact with a COVID-19 case. • Designated staff will contact health dept. to confirm case and to begin collaboration on contact tracing. • If a student rides school district transportation and bus ride is >15 minutes, students within 6 feet on bus should be considered a close contact • After confirming “probable case”, use school’s communication protocol to notify class/cohort/staff that PCHD is aware of COVID-19 case and will assist in determining and notifying exposed individuals • Work with PCHD to develop close contact list and information |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though the COVID-19 test was negative, the ill person is considered a “probable case” because of recent close contact and the negative test may be a false negative viral test • Ill person should isolate at home for 10 days since symptoms first appeared, and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving |
| Putnam County Health Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that “probable case” was exposed to a confirmed case • Work with school to review close contact list to identify exposed individuals • Review that barriers such as face masks, 6 feet distancing, physical barriers were consistently maintained during the school day. This may change exposed individuals • Notify exposed contacts to initiate quarantine period |
| School District Superintendent or Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with PCHD to determine if class and/or cohort quarantine is indicated • Communicate decision to quarantine according to communication policies |
| Exposed persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Scenario 1a |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All household members should be sent home to quarantine, see Scenario 1a |



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Scenario 4a. An ill symptomatic student or staff member **does not get tested** with a COVID-19 viral test. Ill person has no known COVID-19 contacts in the past 14 days.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send individual home (if not home already) • Note is required from healthcare provider before returning to school |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the ill person has respiratory symptoms and does not seek consultation with a healthcare provider, isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • If no alternative diagnosis is identified as the cause of the person’s illness, the ill person should isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • If a clear alternative non-respiratory diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness (e.g., a positive urine culture in a febrile child), then usual disease-specific return-to-school guidance should be followed and person should be fever-free for 24 hours, without use of fever-reducing medicine • A healthcare provider note is required for return to school prior to completing 10 days of isolation, ensuring that the person is no longer contagious. Consultation with health care provider can be via phone, virtual, or in person visit per health care provider’s discretion. |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no alternative diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness, then all household members should quarantine at home. Refer to Scenario 1a. • If a clear alternative non-respiratory diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness (e.g., a positive urine culture in a febrile child), then all household members may continue school attendance. |



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Scenario 4b. An ill student or staff member **does not get tested** with a COVID-19 viral test, and a clear alternative non-respiratory diagnosis **is not** identified. Ill person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

| Involved person | Action |
|--|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send individual home (if not home already). The ill person is a “probable case” due to recent contact with a COVID-19 case. • Designated staff will contact health dept. to confirm case and to begin collaboration on contact tracing. • If a student rides school district transportation and bus ride is >15 minutes, students within 6 feet on bus should be considered a close contact • After confirming “probable case”, use school’s communication protocol to notify class/cohort/staff that PCHD is aware of COVID-19 case and will assist in determining and notifying exposed individuals • Work with PCHD to develop close contact list and information. Recommend close contacts to quarantine. |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no alternative diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness, the ill person should isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • If an alternative respiratory diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness (e.g., positive influenza test), COVID-19 is still not ruled out. Co-infection is possible. The ill person should isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • A healthcare provider note is required for return to school prior to completing 10 days of isolation, ensuring that the person is no longer contagious. Consultation with health care provider can be via phone, virtual, or in person visit per health care provider’s discretion. |
| Putnam County Health Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that “probable case” was exposed to a confirmed case • Work with school to review close contact list to identify exposed individuals • Review that barriers such as face masks, 6 feet distancing, physical barriers were consistently maintained during the school day. This may change exposed individuals • Notify exposed contacts to initiate quarantine period |
| Exposed persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to <u>Scenario 1a</u> |



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|---|---|
| School District Superintendent or Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with PCHD to determine if class and/or cohort quarantine is indicated Communicate decision to quarantine according to communication policies |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no alternative diagnosis is identified as the cause of the person’s illness, then all household members should quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure to the ill sibling. Refer to Scenario 1a. If an alternative respiratory diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider, then all household members still require quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure to the ill sibling. Refer to Scenario 1a. |

Scenario 4c. An ill student or staff member **does not get tested** with a COVID-19 viral test, and a clear non-respiratory diagnosis is identified as cause of illness. Ill person was in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days.

| Involved person | Action |
|---|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send individual home (if not home already). The ill person is not considered a “probable case”, due to alternative diagnosis |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a clear alternative non-respiratory diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness (e.g., a positive urine culture in a febrile child), then usual disease-specific return-to-school guidance should be followed. However, this student also requires quarantine at home for <i>14 days after date of last exposure</i> to the COVID-19 positive contact (refer to Scenario 1a, and meet usual return-to-school guidance for diagnosis. If person develops new COVID-19 symptoms during quarantine, refer to Scenario 2b. |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a clear alternative non-respiratory diagnosis is identified by a healthcare provider as the cause of the person’s illness (e.g., a positive urine culture in a febrile child), then all household members may continue school attendance, as long as the family member develops no COVID-19 symptoms during quarantine. |



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Scenario 5. One student of staff member has a **positive** COVID-19 viral test

| Involved person | Action |
|---|---|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send individual home (if not home already). • Designated staff will contact health dept. to confirm case and to begin collaboration on contact tracing. • If a student rides school district transportation and bus ride is >15 minutes, students within 6 feet on bus should be considered a close contact • After confirming positive case, use school's communication protocol to notify class/cohort/staff that PCHD is aware of COVID-19 case and will assist in determining and notifying exposed individuals • Work with PCHD to develop close contact list and information. Recommend close contacts to quarantine. |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • A negative viral COVID-19 test is NOT needed for return to school |
| Putnam County Health Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with school to review close contact list to identify exposed individuals • Review that barriers such as face masks, 6 feet distancing, physical barriers were consistently maintained during the school day. This may change exposed individuals • Notify exposed contacts to initiate quarantine period |
| Exposed persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Scenario 1a |
| School District Superintendent or Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with PCHD to determine if class and/or cohort quarantine is indicated • Communicate decision to quarantine according to communication policies |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All household members must quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure. Refer to Scenario 1a. |



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Scenario 6. Two or more people within same class have a **positive** COVID-19 viral test within 14 days of each other

| Involved persons | Action |
|---|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send individuals home (if not home already). • Designated staff will contact health dept. to confirm cases and to begin collaboration on contact tracing. • If a student rides school district transportation and bus ride is >15 minutes, students within 6 feet on bus should be considered a close contact • After confirming positive cases, use school’s communication protocol to notify class/cohort/staff that PCHD is aware of COVID-19 case and will assist in determining and notifying exposed individuals • Work with PCHD to develop close contact list and information • If PCHD determines an entire class requires quarantine, school will follow their communication protocol |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • A negative viral COVID-19 test is NOT needed for return to school |
| Putnam County Health Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with school to review close contact list to identify exposed individuals • Review that barriers such as face masks, 6 feet distancing, physical barriers were consistently maintained during the school day. This may change exposed individuals • Notify exposed contacts to initiate quarantine period |
| Exposed persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to <u>Scenario 1a</u> |
| School District Superintendent or Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with PCHD to determine if class quarantine is indicated • Communicate decision to quarantine according to communication policies |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All household members must quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure. Refer to <u>Scenario 1a</u>. |



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Scenario 7. Two or more people in different class have a **positive** COVID-19 viral test within 14 days

| Involved persons | Action |
|--|--|
| School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send individuals home (if not home already). • Designated staff will contact health dept. to confirm cases and to begin collaboration on contact tracing. • If a student rides school district transportation and bus ride is >15 minutes, students within 6 feet on bus should be considered a close contact • After confirming positive cases, use school's communication protocol to notify class/cohort/staff that PCHD is aware of COVID-19 case and will assist in determining and notifying exposed individuals • Work with PCHD to develop close contact list and information • If PCHD determines an entire class requires quarantine, school will follow their communication protocol |
| Ill person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate at home for 10 days after symptoms first appeared and until 24 hours after fever is resolved, without use of fever-reducing medicine, and symptoms are improving • A negative viral COVID-19 test is NOT needed for return to school |
| Putnam County Health Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with school to review close contact list to identify exposed individuals • If cases are related (e.g., same household, or same exposure source outside of school setting), may not be due to transmission across different classes. Review that barriers such as face masks, 6 feet distancing, physical barriers were consistently maintained during the school day. This may change exposed individuals Notify exposed contacts to initiate quarantine period • If cases are unrelated (e.g., not assigned to same cohort/class, cannot identify a common source outside of school setting), these may be sporadic cases. Refer to Scenario 5. • If the cases are unrelated but have definite exposure to each other during school day (e.g., not assigned to same cohort/class, but attend same after-school activity), this may be due to transmission during groups outside of class Recommend to quarantine if specific groups can be identified. If specific overlapping groups cannot be identified, recommend quarantine of all affected cohorts. |



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|---|---|
| | Notify exposed contacts to initiate quarantine period |
| Exposed persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Scenario 1a |
| School District Superintendent or Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with PCHD to determine if class and/or cohort quarantine is indicated Communicate decision to quarantine according to communication policies |
| Household members, including siblings (if ill person is a student) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All household members must quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure. Refer to Scenario 1a. |



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Terms to Know

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------|--|
| Coronavirus | A large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals. |
| COVID-19 | Abbreviation for the coronavirus disease 2019, a disease caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. |
| Outbreak | Two or more COVID-19 cases in 14 days and share an epilink |
| Epilink | A place or someone that people who test positive for COVID-19 have in common such as workplace, school event or activity, or family member. It serves as a link or connection between people who are confirmed to have COVID-19. |
| Probable Case | Individuals with an epilink to a positive lab-confirmed case and then become symptomatic. |
| Community Spread | When people have been infected with the virus in an area and some are not sure how or where they became infected. |
| Isolation | Separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. |
| Quarantine | Separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. |
| Social Distancing | Measures intended to limit the movement of people in order to interrupt the transmission of infectious, contagious diseases. |
| Close Contact | Someone who is within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more to a confirmed or probable case |